



## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Media Contact:** Barry Kukovich  
412-430-3187  
[barry.d.kukovich@peoples-gas.com](mailto:barry.d.kukovich@peoples-gas.com)

### PEOPLES SUPPORTS CREATION OF MARKET-DRIVEN REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM

#### Food21 of Pennsylvania will Target all Phases of Food Production and Distribution

**PITTSBURGH, PA (April 1, 2019)** – Peoples is providing support with management expertise and business relationships, as well as start-up funding for a new non-profit venture, incorporated in Pennsylvania with the goal of uniting diverse elements of the food system in a comprehensive, regional effort. Food21 of Pennsylvania will serve as a catalyst to bring together state-of-the-art energy technology, controlled environment agriculture, traditional farming, food processing, the maker space, workforce preparedness, improved nutrition and market distribution.

“For many years, various aspects of the food economy have been operating in silos – from agriculture to processing to distribution and ultimately to consumers,” said Food21 President, Joe Bute. “Taken together, food is one of the largest and most accessible industries in our state for business and employment. It’s high time that we start working toward the goal of integrating our region’s food system and recognizing it in our economic development efforts.”

Peoples’ involvement in the Food21 effort was inspired by a *National Geographic* [article](#) on the agricultural revolution in The Netherlands. “By 2050, we will need to grow an amount of food that equals all the food that’s been grown by all the farmers in the world since agriculture began,” said Barry Kukovich, Director of Community and Media Relations for Peoples. “The Netherlands is getting ten times the food yield that we are getting in the U.S. When I read that they are doing it using Combined Heat and Power (CHP), a natural gas technology, it made me realize that Pennsylvania’s natural gas resources could enable agricultural growth here, as well. The goal of Food21 closely mirrors the work that the Dutch have done in innovating and advancing their food economy, now one of the global production powerhouses.”

Other founders of the Food21 effort include Rick Terrien, Founder of Artisan Food Networks, who has relocated from Wisconsin to Pittsburgh to serve as Food 21’s Director of Business Development, and Glenn Ford, CEO of Praxis/InCity Farms, Minnesota, who will lead a 10-acre aquaponics campus in Duquesne, PA, incorporating CHP technology. Together with Bute, the team authored a white paper for Peoples, *Food21: Building a Resilient and Sustainable Food Economy for the Pittsburgh Region*. The paper can be downloaded at [www.Food21.org](http://www.Food21.org).

“Everywhere we’ve talked about this, from The Pennsylvania Grange to Chatham University to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, we’ve been met with nothing but support and eagerness to participate,” Joe Bute said. “Under the guidance of Rick Terrien, we’ve already created the Pittsburgh FaB (Food and Beverage Network), 67 members and growing throughout the region.”

Additional locations for InCity Farms aquaponics facilities are under consideration, and Food21 has consulted with economic development professionals in multiple counties to gather information on possible sites. The Food21 team has also been in contact with educational professionals to discuss workforce development.

The Food21 Board of Directors consists of Len Caric, CEO and President, Uncle Charlie’s Sausage; Meredith Meyer Grelli, Owner, Wigle Whiskey and Threadbare Cider & Mead; Leah Lizarondo, Founder, 412 Food Rescue; Audrey Murrell, Dean, College of Business Administration-University of Pittsburgh; Greg Phillips, District Manager/CEO, Westmoreland Conservation District; Rita Resick, Co-Owner/Vice President Marketing and Treasurer, Laurel Valley Farms; and Henry Simonds, President, Henry John Simonds Foundation. For more information on the board and team please visit [www.Food21.org](http://www.Food21.org).

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#### **About Peoples:**

Peoples is an energy provider serving approximately 740,000 homes and businesses in Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Kentucky. The company’s mission is to improve the lives of its customers and to help build long-term economic growth for the regions it serves. For more information about Peoples, visit [www.peoples-gas.com](http://www.peoples-gas.com) and follow Peoples on social media @peoplesnatgas.